

PARENTAL DEPRIVATIONS AND THE DILEMMA OF THE GIRL-CHILD IN THE SOCIETY: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

by

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Abstract

The Girl-child is a product of two people, man and woman, who are called parents. The vital place and role of parents in the life of any girl-child cannot be overemphasized. Populations of two hundred teachers were sampled for the study. The paper identified the causes of parental deprivations to include death, divorce and separation, a girl-child used as house-help, among others. Parental deprivations have implications on the life of the Girl-child. Therefore, the teachers in schools should identify children from deprived homes and render academic social, financial and psychological help as much as possible. The study advocated that parents should keep their marital vows, plan their families and avoid anything that would lead to separation or divorce. Equal love and educational opportunity should be given to every child irrespective of gender.

Introduction

Deprivation has many faces; the child who grows up in a home which is culturally and educationally un-stimulating is handicapped by environmental deprivation. The child who is unloved and rejected by parents suffers emotional deprivation. Also, the child who lives in residential Child Care for a long period or permanently is deprived of normal family life. Deprivation is also categorized by Njoku (2004) to include psychological deprivation, educational deprivation, mental deprivation, social deprivation, emotional deprivation, spiritual deprivation, environmental deprivation, economic deprivation and institutional deprivation. The society exposes us to one or more of these deprivations from time to time due to some factors.

The girl child begins to learn from the day she is born and from this day too, she is affected by parental love. At best, such love is unconditional, whether it is a boy or girl, attractive or unattractive. This caring/affection is so all – pervasive that it communicates itself to help in everything that the parents do for the child. If this early experience of love has been lacking, if she has been rejected or deprived, the child will be apathetic or unresponsive. The unconditionally accepted and loved child, learns to live in a pleasurable awareness of her own identity, the joy of rewarding relationship and a desire for approval which afterwards aid learning in life. The rejected child is deprived not only of affection but simultaneously, becomes both backward and maladjusted.

The home environment can make or mar, retard or promote the development of the girl child. Evidence has been accumulating on the damaging effects of a culturally impoverished or deprived environment. A home, be it small or big which fails to provide necessary condition to develop the girl child's potential will eventually result in some deprivations. In short, the effects of an un-stimulating home background of unhappy relations between child and parents are emotional difficulties, stunted intellectual development and poor educational achievements.

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Pringle (1972) pointed out that children who grew up in adopted homes show much better emotional adjustment and educational attainment than those who have remained with their own mothers in a stressful deprived environment. Parents should therefore establish a loving, secure mutually satisfying relationship with children and provide an environment which stimulates a personal bond of affection between the girl child and parents.

Parents are the first and closest people a girl child have relationship with in life. The vital place and role of parents in the life of the girl child cannot be overemphasized. Every child looks up to the parents for love, care and provision of basic needs of life such as love, food, clothing, and shelter. Every child has the right to enjoy the basic needs and when a girl child lacks these needs or deprived of these needs from the parents, the girl child is faced with some problems which tend to cut off her relationship with the parents at that tender age. Apart from the basic needs of life, parents also provide good medical care and good education for the girl child. Every girl child has a right to good education and parents should avail the girl child all educational opportunities.

Parental deprivation is a situation where the girl child is denied of whatsoever things she ought to receive from the parents (Njoku 2004). Parental deprivation is common in the society today. Starting from the home, a girl child faces a hostile parent who does not show love. The child is deprived emotionally; no care, no love and all these torment the girl child.

Deprivations may present itself in various situations. A girl child born at a time the parents were expecting a boy child could suffer rejection. Circumstances like death of parents, ill-health, divorce or separation on the part of the parents could militate against the love and care a child receives from the parents and is deprived. Other incidence of a girl child being used as a house help outside her own home deprive her of parental care as well as being taken care of by a nanny or house help when the parents are preoccupied in career and business. In fact, issues of parental deprivation abound in our homes and the girl child is disadvantaged in most circumstances.

Research findings have shown that families blessed with sons and daughters tend to give preferential treatment to boys. Mamman (2003) and Dauglas (2012) in their study stated that parental resources were devoted to sons than daughters. This was because of the perceived extra benefits of advancing male employment as a result of education than a perceived more limited benefits from the girl child advancing through employment. In other words, parents perceived that they gain more from male children than female children when employed after education.

According to the Beijing conference of 1995, the girl child is particularly vulnerable especially the abandoned, homeless and displaced, street children who are discriminated against. From all indications, the girl child status has not been favourable. From the traditional homes, she is relegated, harmful traditional practices and culture makes her a mother and a cook. At the societal level, she is secondary and at the wider world she is seen, but not accorded the rightful status and recognition. Hence, one could ask, Is being a girl child a

curse? I rightly say, No. Since in the beginning, God made them male and female but the 'people' made gender differences and discrimination which thus made the girl child suffer deprivations in the society.

Statement of Problem

There have been general outcry from individuals, groups, governments and international bodies on harmful practices facing the girl child. These practices have come as a result of some deprivations suffered by the girl child. The continual presence of these unbaptized practices hampers girl child status as she is denied or deprived of her power from home due to parental deprivation. The study therefore seeks to find out the causes of parental deprivation of the girl child.

Research Questions:

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the causes of parental deprivation?
2. What effects will parental deprivation have on the Girl-child?
3. What are possible remedies or ways of preventing parental deprivation?

Hypotheses:

Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁, There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the cause of parental deprivation.

H₀₂, There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study was to investigate the incidence of parental deprivation of the girl-child. Specifically, the study sought to:

- a. identify the causes of parental deprivation of the Girl-child in the society.
- b. assess the consequences of parental deprivation on the girl child
- c. determine possible remedies or ways of correcting this problem

Method

Research Design: The study was a survey type and as such was looking for information on facts, attitude and opinions of respondents. This design was considered ideal for this study because the study involved collecting data from a sample of teachers on parental deprivation which has effects or consequences on the girl-child status in the society and the possible ways of remedying or correcting this problem in order to improve the girl-child's status in the society.

Population and Sample: The population of the study composed of a total of five hundred and ninety three (593) in the twenty-one secondary schools in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample of the study was made up of two hundred teachers in the twenty-one secondary schools in the Local Government Area. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select the subjects. This was done by randomly selecting hundred male and hundred female teachers from the twenty secondary schools. In the twenty secondary schools, equal number of five male and five female teachers were randomly selected. The technique employed by the researcher was to ensure that every member of the target population was adequately represented.

Instrument for Data Collection: Questionnaire titled "The Girl-child and Parental Deprivations in the Society" (GCPDS) was constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The construction was guided by the related literature reviewed. The questionnaire had four sections; A, B, C, and D. section A contain items eliciting bio-data information of the respondents while section B had (15) fifteen items with information on perceived causes of Parental Deprivations. Sections C and D had ten (10) items each on the consequences of Parental Deprivation on the Girl-child and possible remedies or ways of correcting parental deprivation of the Girl-child. The response option to the items were structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree SA = 4 points. Agree (A) = 3 points Disagree (D) = 2 points and strongly disagree (SD) = 1 point.

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument: The questionnaire was validated by experts from School of Education of the College of Education Agbor. The validation covered face, language construction, relevance and clarity. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method. The researcher administered the GCPDS questionnaire on the only secondary school which was not part of the actual study. A reliability co-efficient value of 0.76 was obtained. This was considered adequate for the study.

Method of Data Collection: A face to face mode of questionnaire administration was employed by the researcher. This was possible due to the use of one local Government in the state. Also, it was to ensure the total recovery of the copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents. All the two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaires distributed were returned and used for the study.

Method of Data Analysis: The data collected from the respondents were subjected to statistical analyses using the mean rating and t-test. Mean was used to answer the research questions. A mean of 2.50 and above was adopted as the decision rule for the items. The t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of parental deprivation?

Table I: Mean Ratings on the Causes of Parental Deprivations

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Number of Respondent	Sum of Scores	X	Decision
1	When the girl child is born out of wedlock	320	180	50	35	200	585	2.92	Accepted
2	Disharmony in the home resulting in quarrelling and fighting	376	189	64	11	200	640	3.2	Accepted
3	Death of father or mother or both parents	520	138	40	4	200	702	3.51	Accepted
4	Divorce or separation of parents	400	156	64	16	200	636	3.18	Accepted
5	Prolonged illness on the part of either of the parents	372	264	22	8	200	602	3.07	Accepted
6	When girls are the only children in the home	336	258	40	10	200	654	3.27	Accepted
7	Lack of adequate education of parents	318	210	76	14	200	612	3.66	Accepted
8	When the girl -child is used as house help	500	158	38	6	200	666	3.33	Accepted
9	Low socio -economic status of parents	328	165	66	30	200	589	2.98	Accepted
10	Many children and close in age due to lack of family planning	370	216	48	12	200	654	3.27	Accepted
11	Pre-occupied parents in career, business and trades	362	190	50	22	200	624	3.12	Accepted
12	Lack of love in the home	400	154	66	16	200	636	3.18	Accepted
13	Harmful traditional practices in the society	376	210	48	12	200	654	3.27	Accepted
14	When the girl child is brought up by a nanny or house help	320	180	50	35	200	585	2.92	Accepted
15	Disabled girl-child	316	212	20	10	200	660	3.32	Accepted

Results from the analysis in Table 1 above showed that the fifteen items obtained mean scores above the decision rule of 2.50. Therefore the causes of parental deprivations identified in the study were accepted.

Research Questions 2: What effects will parental deprivation have on the girl-child?

Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Effects of Parental Deprivations on the Girl-Child

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Number of Respondent	Sum of Scores	X	Decision
1	Hatred For Father & Mother	340	240	66	2	200	648	3.24	Accepted
2	Waywardness	600	75	40	5	200	720	3.6	Accepted
3	Low Self Esteem	200	189	104	35	200	528	2.64	Accepted
4	Quarrelsome & Aggressive	416	195	40	11	200	662	3.31	Accepted
5	Abnormal Behaviour	284	189	110	11	200	594	2.97	Accepted
6	Experiences Psychological Trauma	556	150	16	3	200	725	3.62	Accepted
7	Poor Academic Performance	676	69	12	2	200	759	3.79	Accepted
8	Experiences ill-Health	318	210	76	14	200	612	3.06	Accepted
9	Negative Influence On Peers	328	164	60	36	200	589	2.94	Accepted
10	Lack Of Adequate Education	576	210	48	12	200	646	3.23	Accepted

Results from the analysis in Table 2 showed that the items obtained mean scores above the decision rule of 2.50. Therefore, the effects of parental deprivation on the girl child were accepted.

Research Question Three: What are possible remedies or ways of preventing parental deprivation?

Table 3: Mean Ratings on the Possible Remedies or Ways of Preventing Parental Deprivation

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Number of Respondent	Sum of Scores	X	Decision
1	Conducive atmosphere in the home	200	189	104	35	200	528	2.64	Accepted
2	Parents should show love in the home	328	165	66	30	200	589	2.94	Accepted
3	Adequate provision and value for the girl child	320	180	55	30	200	602	3.01	Accepted
4	Marital vows should be held in high esteem	284	189	110	11	200	594	2.97	Accepted
5	Couple to avoid separation or divorce	550	150	16	3	200	725	3.62	Accepted
6	Parents should plan their family	360	190	54	20	200	624	3.12	Accepted
7	Spending quality time with the girl child	310	190	50	35	200	585	2.92	Accepted
8	Provision of adequate health facilities in the society	336	256	42	10	200	654	3.27	Accepted
9	Provision of true UBSE Education	340	240	66	2	200	648	3.24	Accepted
10	Enacting and enforcing laws in favour of the girl-child rights and status.	606	75	40	5	200	720	3.6	Accepted

Result from the analysis in table three (3) showed that the ten items obtained mean scores above the decision rule of 2.50. Therefore, the possible remedies/ways of preventing parental deprivation were accepted.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the causes of parental deprivation

Table 4: Summary of T-Test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teachers of Causes of Parental Deprivations

Variable	Total No	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Cal. T	Critical T	Prob	Decision
Male Teachers	100	48.90	15.19					
Female Teacher	100	41.90	15.29	198	3.25	1.63	P < 0.05	Accept HO

Table 4 above showed that the calculated value of 3.25 is greater than the critical value of 1.63 with 198 degree of freedom of 0.05 level of significance. Null hypothesis 1 is therefore not rejected.

HO₁: There is no significant in the mean ratings of male and female teaches on the effects of parental deprivations on the girl-child

Table 5: Summary of T-Test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teaches on the Effects of Parental Deprivation on the Girl Child

Variable	Total No	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Cal. T	Critical T	Prob	Decision
Male Teachers	100	49.00	15.22					
Female Teacher	100	42.00	16.28	198	3.07	1.63	P < 0.05	Accept HO

Table 5 showed that the calculated t-test of 3.07 is greater than the critical value of 1.63 with 198 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Null hypothesis 2 is therefore not rejected.

Discussions:

The result of this study has revealed the causes of parental deprivation on the girl child. Analysis of data based on research question one and the test of null hypothesis one shown in table one and four confirmed the authenticity of the above findings. It was observed that all the itemized causes of parental deprivation have their mean scores above 2.50. The acceptance of the null hypothesis one proved that there is no significance difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the causes of parental deprivation. This was evidenced from the fact that the calculated t-value of 3.25 was greater than the critical t-value

of 1.63. The above finding was in agreement with Njoku (2004) which stated that paternal and maternal deprivation with a critical analysis is causes and effects.

Consequently, the analysis of data based on research question two and a t-test of the null hypothesis two as shown on table 2 and five revealed that the ten identified effects of parental deprivation were accepted, having obtained a mean rating of above 2.50. Evidently, the findings the null hypothesis two revealed that male and female teachers unanimously accepted the effect of parental deprivation on the girl child. This is evidenced in the study because the calculated t-value of 3.08 is greater than the critical t value of 1.64 hence, there is no significance between male and female teachers on their opinion on the effects of parental deprivations on the girl child. This is supported by the study of Ihebereme (2008) of poor home training as evidence of negligence of duty by parents.

On research question three, the ten identified items for possible remedies or ways of preventing parental deprivation obtained above 2.50 mean ratings. Therefore, they are accepted as possible remedies for parental deprivations on the girl child.

Implications for Teachers

The home remains the first place of formative stage of the child. If the girl child suffers parental deprivation, then the teacher at school would be in the best position to offer assistance to the girl child. Njoku (2004) stated the following as school / teachers' roles:

1. School authorities and teachers should try to identify children from deprived home and render help where possible academic, social or psychological
2. Avoid reminding the child that her home is not stable or even making remarks that would dehumanize her.
3. The teacher should help to protect them from exploitation, extortion, sexual harassment and so on
4. Where the school is financially stable, a rehabilitation scheme could be opened for such children to help them take care of themselves.
5. Teachers should be mindful of the ethics of the profession in the performance of their duty to the deprived children.
6. Teachers should encourage deprived girls to take their studies seriously in order to overcome the side effects of parental deprivation.
7. Teachers should make out time to visit homes where parental deprivations become pronounced.

Conclusion

Parental deprivation of the girl child could be a fearful challenge in our world today. If the girl child lacks parental care of any sort, its effect could be disastrous. It is advisable that parents, no matter their status or education, should provide adequate love and care in the home and be a role model to their children. Education, money or position cannot play the role of a parent. Finally, the school, church and government should ensure the removal of barriers to encourage the full development of the potentials of the girl child in the society.

Recommendations

The home/family is the main influence at the formative stage of the girl-child. It is important that parents should play their roles and ensure that the girl-child suffers no deprivation.

Firstly, parents should keep their marital vows, plan their families and avoid anything that would lead to separation or divorce.

Secondly, equal love should be shown to the girl-child and the boy-child. There should be no discrimination on the basis of genders.

Thirdly, parents should learn not to give out the girl-child at a tender age to people who are heartless.

Fourthly, avoid marrying many wives and having many children to enable you give them equal attention and love so that the girl-child suffers no lack.

Fifthly, do not allow the health or death of the mother to rob the girl-child the love and care you have for her.

Sixthly, for parents who are 'so busy' and pre-occupied in career, business and trades, they should as much as possible make less use of house-helpers in rearing the girl-child at tender age. Do not forget that the formative stage of the girl-child is the most important.

Seventhly, equal educational opportunities should be given to both male and female children. The issue of 'no money' so boys first, should be discouraged.

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE
FORUM FOR AFRICAN WOMEN
EDUCATIONALISTS



Vol. 2 No. 1, March, 2014